

Umair A. Shah, M.D., M.P.H.



In 2013, Dr. Umair A. Shah was appointed Executive Director and Local Health Authority for Harris County Public Health (HCPH) – the nationally recognized and accredited \$100 million agency comprised of 700 public health professionals serving the nation’s third largest county with 4.7 million people.

Dr. Shah earned his B.A. in Philosophy from Vanderbilt University and M.D. from the University of Toledo Health Science Center. He completed Internal Medicine residency, General Medicine/Primary Care fellowship, and an MPH in Management & Policy Sciences at The University of Texas Health Science Center. During his training, he also completed an international health policy internship at World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters in Switzerland.

Dr. Shah has enjoyed a distinguished career as an emergency department physician at Houston’s well-respected Michael DeBakey VA Medical Center. His journey in public health began as Chief Medical Officer of Galveston County Health District before joining HCPH to oversee its clinical health system and infectious disease portfolio. Under his leadership, HCPH has won numerous awards including recognition as Local Health Department of the Year by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) in 2016 for its work in innovation, engagement, and health equity.

Sought for his practical insights, Dr. Shah has presented in both the Texas Legislature and on Capitol Hill and sits on numerous national boards and advisory groups including with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Network for Public Health Law, Trust for America’s Health, Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), Texas Department of State Health Services, and Texas Medical Association. He previously served as president of NACCHO (and its Texas affiliate) representing the nearly 3,000 local health departments across the U.S. He remains active in clinical and academic activities through various Texas Medical Center institutions.

In addition to clinical activities, Dr. Shah has participated in various leadership trainings including with the National Public Health Leadership Institute, the American Leadership Forum, and the Kresge Foundation’s Emerging Leaders in Public Health Program. He has responded to numerous large-scale emergencies such as Tropical Storm Allison; Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Ike; novel H1N1 influenza; the devastating earthquakes in Kashmir and Haiti; and responses to Ebola and Zika, respectively. Dr. Shah served as medical branch co-director for the 27,000 Katrina evacuees sheltered at the Houston Astrodome in 2005 and recently led Harris County’s public health efforts in response to Hurricane Harvey in 2017-2018.

On a personal level, originally from Pakistan and having grown up in Cincinnati, Dr. Shah appreciates the excitement of both cricket and baseball, while (unfortunately) remaining a diehard Cincinnati Bengals football fan. His travels have taken him across the globe from London to Lahore; Athens to Auckland; Dubai to Dhaka. He is married with three children who make sure he takes family time out to enjoy movies, museums, and parks.

Over his career, Dr. Shah has made significant contributions to the fields of medicine and public health as a clinician, innovator, educator, and leader.